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12 February 2015

Nick Holt  
Headteacher  
Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education  
Bramber Road  
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London  
W14 9PA

Dear Mr Holt

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Normand Croft Community School for Early Years and Primary Education**

Following my visit to your school on 10 February 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- strengthen governance by sharpening governors' monitoring of its action plan and improving administration of all governors' meetings
- widen the range of support and challenge for the school beyond the local authority and the 'tri-borough' resources.

**Evidence**

During the visit, I met with you, two governors, including the Chair and two middle and senior leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I spoke with a local authority representative on the telephone. You accompanied me on short tours of the school during which we made brief visits to lessons. I spoke with groups

of students and examined samples of their work. I evaluated the school's internal performance information, minutes of governing body and improvement board meetings, and the school's action plan.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection, two members of the Early Years Foundation Stage team have left the school. In addition, the early years lead teacher and an Early Years Foundation Stage team member are on maternity leave. Their duties are being carried out respectively by the deputy headteacher and a temporary early years team member. Current vacancies exist for an early years teacher and two Early Years Foundation Stage team members. An additional Key Stage 2 teacher has joined the school on a fixed term contract.

## **Main findings**

You and your senior leaders are bringing about steady improvement. You have a very good understanding of the changes needed in the school to bring about the necessary improvement and you have produced an effective action plan. The interim steps within the plan enable you and your governors to accurately check on the school's progress. Lines of accountability, shared amongst all leaders, are clear and precise. However, arrangements for the monitoring of the plan's impact by governors need to be more robust.

Governors are increasingly able to offer effective support and challenge for the school. They have responded positively to the findings of the most recent inspection, and they now have a more accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The planned re-constitution of the governing body will assist them in the strengthening of their monitoring role. This should be completed as quickly as possible.

Similarly, minutes of governors' meetings, while comprehensive and detailed, do not make clear what actions have been agreed, by whom they will be taken or by when. The planned review of the professional administration of governors' meetings is an appropriate response to the need for such improvement.

The leaders in English, the Early Years Foundation Stage and mathematics exhibit confidence and sound subject knowledge. Their comprehensive training and development programmes for staff are already having a clear impact. For example, in the early years, skilled baseline assessments of pupils combined with ambitious targets for children's progress have resulted in more pupils meeting and exceeding age-related expectations. Such professional conversations are beginning to have a clear impact in the early years.

Similarly, the energies devoted to staff training in the teaching of writing are beginning to reap dividends. Training plans are coherent, progressive and mirror the

quality of the school's action plan for writing. Leaders have a skilled understanding of the teaching of writing. Teachers and support staff are beginning to appreciate the mastery needed in the teaching of writing – especially with the youngest children.

The work already begun by leaders in improving staff and pupils' oracy is developing well. Inspectors witnessed, and pupils confirmed, that colloquial and slang language from children is increasingly challenged by teachers and support staff. The work of the school's speech and language therapist is particularly effective in this regard. Her training for the staff, her convenient availability to parents, and her skill in supporting the ambitions of the school in the early years is pivotal. The consequent improvement in the range and depth of children's vocabulary is evident – in meeting with them and in examining their exercise books.

Pupils are working more effectively in their lessons. Teachers are planning more exciting activities which stimulate children's interest, motivate them to work harder and challenge them intellectually. One Year 4 pupil said that the adults in the school provide questions which 'encourage me to be curious'. The use of 'story cubes' and 'cooperative feedback' are popular with pupils and are helping them to develop confidence in their understanding.

More able pupils confirm that the work they are given is more challenging. The use of the 'extended challenge box' in Key Stage 2 is popular and results in more secure learning for these children. However, leaders accept that this provision must be strengthened further through the use of compulsory tasks alongside free choice for pupils.

Pupils state that marking is improving and inspectors agree. Bespoke training for staff has resulted in gradual improvements. The use of 'Tickled Pink' and 'Green for Growth' marking techniques is popular with pupils. In the best examples, the teachers' use of technical expertise is resulting in secure progress in pupils' understanding. This is particularly effective in the marking of writing. However, this is not consistently used by all teachers in all year groups and teachers do not always insist that children formally respond to 'Green for Growth' comments.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school has secured access to a wide range of well-targeted external support.

The local authority's support for the school's improvement board, for instance, is commendable along with the skilled support of the EAL advisory teacher. The half termly reviews are appropriate in monitoring the school's progress. However, the range of support brokered through the local authority is too narrow, limited as it is

by the tri-borough borders and restricts access to better quality advice to support the very specific challenges in the school.

The school is already making very effective use of a number of external consultants and partnerships. They bring a wealth of experience and knowledge which is clearly helping in the school's improvement. For example, the partnerships with two local outstanding primary schools are already helping the school in strengthening teaching through their coaching of Years 3 and 5 teachers.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hammersmith and Fulham.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Clinton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**